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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3405

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The Honorable Tommy Thompson  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I was disturbed to read in the *Washington Post* earlier this week that the first meeting of the Task Force on Drug Importation was initially closed to the press and then opened only to limited coverage by print reporters. Given the interest and concern about this issue, the remaining meetings should be held in public and be fully open to press coverage.

In my judgment, the task force did not get off to a good start. It made a series of bad choices when it initially tried to bar press coverage of its first meeting altogether, and then when protests forced them to retreat from that plan, decided to allow "pen and pad" coverage only, continuing to bar radio and television coverage.

This task force needs to be working in full public view. Given the initial plan to install a full-throttled opponent of prescription drug re-importation as the Chairman of this task force, there is ample skepticism about its work and intentions. You were wise to remove the former FDA Commissioner as the head of this task force because its work would never have been accepted as fair and objective. Likewise, attempting to hold the task force meetings in secret will engender a great deal of suspicion. It is, therefore, essential that its work be open to full public scrutiny.

Please, Mr. Secretary, open the doors. Let C-SPAN bring the task force's proceedings into millions of American homes. Allow Americans to see and hear for themselves, and to judge for themselves, how this task force is doing its work. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Byron L. Dorgan  
U.S. Senator

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